

SOME
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
Affiento Trade,

As it hath been Exercised by the

South-Sea Company;

PROVING THE

D A M A G E,

Which will accrue thereby to the

British Commerce and Plantations
in A M E R I C A,

And particularly to

J A M A I C A.

To which is annexed,

A Sketch of the Advantages of that
Island to *Great Britain*, by its annual Pro-
duce, and by its Situation for Trade or War.

ADDRESSED TO

His Grace the Duke of NEWCASTLE,
One of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries
of State.

By a Person who resided several Years at *Jamaica*.

The Second EDITION.

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P R E F A C E.

THough the following Sheets may seem to relate only to a particular Affair between the South-Sea Company and the Inhabitants of Jamaica, yet whoever will be at the Trouble of perusing them over, will perceive a new and larger Scene opened, which may prove fatal to the Trade and Navigation, and consequently to the general Interest of Great Britain. That the Colonies in America are of vast Importance to the Nation; that the Northern and Southern Plantations have a mutual Dependance on each other; and consequently, that a Diminution of the Interests of any of them, will proportionably affect the Whole, must be allowed by every Man, who has any Notions of them and of Trade. If then they appear, on Enquiry, to be in a declining Condition: Or if I have pointed out any Thing which contributes to it, and may in any wise tend to their further Prejudice; it becomes every Man, who is interested in them, to lend his helping Hand to put a Stop to those Evils which will otherwise grow upon them. And who is not in some Degree interested in the Plantations? Is not their Interest the Interest of every Englishman, who has any Regard for the Welfare and Prosperity of his Country?

try? For at least one Half of the British Trade and Navigation absolutely depend on them.

What a Clamour was raised, not long since, about the Ostend Company, because their Trade would affect our East-India Company? If then it was worth while to differ with a Potent Prince, on Account of a Trade, which, after all the Arguments that have yet been produced, seems undetermined whether it be beneficial to the Nation or not; certainly the Colonies, which are allowed to be equal in Value to as many Gold and Silver Mines, must be thought worthy of our Attention and Care.

Whoever will look into the Exports of their Manufactures, and Produce from Great Britain, for some Years past, will find that they have diminished every Year; and is it not high Time to enquire into the Causes and Reasons of it, and to apply a proper Remedy, lest that beneficial Branch of Commerce should be totally lost to the Nation? It may perhaps be readily answered, that it is owing to the Dutch and French supplying foreign Markets with Sugar and other Commodities, cheaper than we can do: If this be the Case, as undoubtedly it is, certainly it is then worth enquiring by what Means they are able to effect it? It must be attributed either to some particular Encouragement they give to their Plantations, or to some Discouragements our own may lie under; and whichever of them it may be, without Doubt it is the Interest of Great Britain, to contrive some Method of putting them at least on an equal Footing with their Neighbours. With this and no other View, I was moved to the Publication of these Sheets, and therefore I hope no Offence will be taken at it, or at any Expression which has fallen from my Pen, through a Want of Skill to conduct it.



My Lord,

AS every Man has not the Talent of speaking in publick, especially before such an august and awful Assembly, as his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council ; so when the Petition of the *South-Sea Company*, in Relation to the Duties on Negroes in *Jamaica*, was heard by Council, before their Lordships, I declined making some Observations on what was offered by those Gentlemen who appeared in behalf of the *Company*, from a Diffidence of my own Skill in explaining them, at that Time, in so full and clear a Manner as they ought to be, before Persons of their Eminence and Distinction.

BUT as the Managers for the *Company* very artfully evaded the *Substance* and *Pretence* of their *Petition*, which they found themselves unable to support, and had Recourse to *new* and *foreign* Matter, I beg leave to recapitulate what was then offered, and to lay the same before *Your Grace*, who then presided in Council ; and especially since the *British Plantations* are within *Your Grace's* Province, as one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

AND though this Affair has been heard, and an Instruction thereupon given to *Major General Hunter*, Governor of *Jamaica*, yet, if any thing I have the Honour to lay before *Your Grace*, clears up any one Point or Difficulty which we were then under, by Means of those Finesses ; or if I am so happy as to touch on any new Argument,

gument, which may convince you of the Reasonableness, and even the Necessity of continuing the *Duty* on all *Negroes* exported from *Jamaica* to the Dominions of foreign Princes; *Your Grace's* Candour and Justice cannot be doubted, in laying them before his Majesty, for his farther Consideration. *Instructions to Governors*, and even *Acts of Parliament*, are often altered [or repealed], when any Inconveniency is discovered, or when it appears that they have been laid on a wrong Foundation.

IN Order to give *Your Grace* a clear and perfect Idea of the whole Affair, it is necessary to observe, that, within a few Years after *Jamaica* was conquered, and put under a Civil Government, a Trade was opened with the *Spaniards*, and successfully carried on, for many Years, for *Negroes*, and other Merchandize; whereby great Quantities of the Manufactures of *Great Britain* were yearly vended, and the Reputation of the Riches brought in, by those Means, occasioned the Island to be well supplied with all kind of Materials, which were necessary for a new Colony, and invited great Numbers of People to become Settlers there: So that this Commerce was a principal Mean of the Island's being so well settled (as it once was) by occasioning a Circulation of Money, which is the Life and Sinews of every Country, and maintaining above 1500 Seamen, who were a Security to it, and made it formidable to its Neighbours.

THE *South-Sea Company*, by obtaining the *Assiento Contract*, have not only deprived this Island of their Trade, but occasioned great Numbers of People, particularly *Seamen*, to remove to other Parts; and even dispute paying the same Duties, which the private Traders paid for many Years; wherein if the Company should be indulg'd, by obtaining the Exemption which they aim at, it will occasion a great Deficiency in his Majesty's Revenues in that Island, and be attended with some other ill Consequences.

THAT the *South-Sea Company* have deprived the Island of its Commerce, and of a considerable Number of Inhabitants, will evidently appear, notwithstanding any
spe-

specious Pretences to the contrary, when it is considered, that, if there was no such *Contract* in Being, or if it was in the Hands of any *other Nation*, they could not carry it on, without the Assistance of the *English*, and that the *Spaniards* or the *Assentists* of any other Nation would be under a Necessity of trading with the Inhabitants of *Jamaica*.

It is well known, that the Trade to *Africa* is chiefly carried on by the *British* Merchants, who have more Ships employ'd therein than all the rest of *Europe*, by which Means our Plantations in *America* are not only well supplied with *Negroes*, but we are able to furnish other Countries, to the great Benefit of the Nation. The *Spaniards*, who have great Occasion for *Negroes*, have no Share in the *Guinea Trade*, and must have them chiefly from us at first or second Hand; for the *French* and *Dutch* are not able to supply their own Colonies; and tho' the *Portuguese* had the greatest Share of that Trade next to the *English*, yet when they obtained the *Assiento*, which was about the Year 1690. they soon found it impracticable for want of a convenient Port, and a larger Share of the Trade to *Africa*; they therefore applied to King *William*, by their Agent *Don James Del Castillo*, for Liberty to settle their principal Factory at *Jamaica*, and to purchase *Negroes* there. His Majesty, being sensible of the Advantages that would accrue thereby to his Subjects in general, and particularly to the Inhabitants of *Jamaica*, gave his Consent, and conferr'd the Honour of Knighthood on the *Don*. The War with *France* and *Spain* put an End to that *Contract*, which was soon after granted to the *French*; but though they had a Colony settled on the North Side of *Hispaniola*, yet they found some Inconveniencies in carrying it on well from thence; and therefore they appointed their chief Factory at *Carthagena*, and were under a Necessity of purchasing great Numbers of *Negroes*, from the Inhabitants of *Jamaica*, not only for the *Assiento*, but for their own Plantations.

THOSE two Instances are sufficient to shew, that no *other Nation* can support or carry on the *Assiento*, but the *English*; for supposing that they had an equal Share

of Navigation, and of the Trade to *Africa*, yet for want of the same Conveniencies, which the *South-Sea Company* have, by their chief Factory's being settled at *Jamaica*, neither the one or the other could manage it without, to any tolerable Advantage, as is demonstrable from the following Considerations:

First, *Jamaica* is about 160 Leagues from the Main Continent, and by being so nearly and happily situated, the *Assiento* Vessels not only have quicker Voyages, but the Factory there must of course have speedier and better Intelligence, than if they were at a greater Distance. This, without Doubt, is a considerable Service to the Company, because their Factory at *Jamaica* is in the nature of a grand Magazine or Warehouse, from whence they furnish the several *Spanish Ports* with *Negroes*, as they are wanted; so that they need not be under the Necessity of reducing their Price or Value, by having more *Negroes* at a Time, at any one Place, than for which there is an immediate Demand; for when they are brought into Port, they must be sold by reason of the great Expence in maintaining them, among the *Spaniards*, where all kind of Provisions are exceeding dear.

Secondly, THE Settlement of the Factory at *Jamaica* is an Advantage not only in the Delivery of the *Negroes* in better Order, by being so nearly situated to the several *Spanish Ports*, but a very great Expence is thereby saved in Navigation; for a Vessel generally sails from *Jamaica* to *Carthagena*, or *Porto Bello*, in three or four Days, and returns in six or seven Days, so that the Voyage may be compleated in ten or fourteen Days; whereas it cannot be done in less than seven or eight Weeks from *Barbadoes* or the *Leward Islands*, which occasions a considerable Difference in the Expence, beside the great Damage their Vessels must receive by beating so far to Windward as they are obliged to do at their Return.

Thirdly, As the *Spaniards* are become very difficult in the Choice of *Negroes*, since they have been so well supplied by the *South-Sea Company*, it is necessary to import two for one; that is, if the Company export 4000 *Negroes*

Negroes from *Jamaica*, they must import at least 8000; because sickly and distemper'd *Negroes*, and such as have any Defect or Blemish, though they will sell among the *Spaniards*, yet the Price they give for such *Negroes* bears no Proportion to what they give for those that are more sightly, considering the *Duties* they are liable to pay to the *King* of *Spain*, and other great Charges which the *South-Sea Company* are at. By Defect or Blemish is meant such *Negroes* as want an *Eye*, a *Toe*, a *Finger*, two or three *Teeth*, or such whose *Teeth* are filed like a *Saw*, as is a common Fashion in some Countries. It is therefore a great Advantage to the *Company* to have a Port so conveniently situated to sort and dispose of such *Negroes* as are improper for the *Spaniards*; by *Sorting* is meant, putting them in *Lots*, in such *Numbers*, *Ages*, and *Sexes* as are demanded by the *Company's* several *Factories*: For Instance, they want at one Place two Hundred *Negroes*; supposing fifty Men, fifty Women, fifty Boys, and fifty Girls; another requires a lesser Number, and more perhaps of one Age or Sex than another. And though all this may be done at *Barbadoes*, yet beside the Inconveniencies I have mentioned in regard to a remote Situation, comparatively to *Jamaica*, it is to be considered, that the Island is so small, and so thick in Settlements, that they cannot raise Provisions sufficient for their own *Negroes*, nor be able to support such a Number as they have among them, without being supplied from the *Northern Colonies*; So that as the *Company*, in such Case, must be obliged to take the same Measures to furnish themselves, it cannot be supposed that those Provisions are so good, so cheap, or so certain of being had, when they are wanted, as at an *Island* where they are produced, and where all other Necessaries are easily to be had.

Fourthly, It is likewise a considerable Advantage to the *Company*, that their Factory is settled at *Jamaica*, because the Ships which are chartered to transport *Negroes* from *Africa*, for the *Assiento*, are able to make a *Freight home*; and it is on that Consideration that the Owners let them out at 6*l.* and 6*l.* 10*s.* per Head, for whatever Number they carry into *Jamaica*: Whereas they

they could not afford to hire out their Ships under 8*l.* 10*s.* or 9*l.* per Head, were they to return home empty. This indeed might be done at *Barbadoes*, but from no other Island, and is an Advantage that no other Nation can have but the *English*; and consequently they can deliver *Negroes* in the *West Indies* so much cheaper. To explain this Article, and shew what a considerable Sum the *Company* saves thereby, I shall compute the Difference at no more than 40*s.* per Head, upon 8000 *Negroes*, which it is necessary for them to import into *Jamaica*, to furnish the *Spaniards* with 4000, and it amounts to 16000*l.* per Annum: And yet it is remarkable, that the *Duties*, which they dispute paying (and were constantly paid by the *private Traders*, when that Branch of Commerce was in their Hands) will not exceed 4000*l.* per Annum.

BUT, before I proceed to examine the *Petition* and *Allegations* of the *South-Sea Company*, it will also be proper to shew *Your Grace*, when the *Duty* on *Negroes* was first laid, and the Reasons which induced the *Assembly* of *Jamaica* to lay it on *Export* rather than on *Import*; this I think the more necessary, in regard that it will take off the Impression of Prejudice and Partiality, and because a certain noble Person was pleased to observe, that it was inconsistent with the Practice of other Countries, a Duty being always laid on *Import*, and a *Drawback* allowed on *Exportation*. A Stress being laid on this seeming Objection, was the principal Occasion of the *Island's* failing in so reasonable and equitable a Point.

THE *Act* of *Assembly*, which lays a Duty on *Negroes*, is entituled, *An Act for imposing a Duty on several Commodities, and applying the same to several Uses*: It is an *Annual Law*, and the Intention of it is to make good the deficient Funds of his Majesty's Revenues, in that Island; and to maintain Parties to suppress the rebellious *Negroes*. It was first raised above twenty Years since, during the War with *France* and *Spain*, and soon after the Trade with the *Spaniards* was opened, by *Queen Anne's* Permission to her Subjects in those Parts; it was laid

laid when the *private Trade* was flourishing, and several Years before the *South-Sea Company*, much less the *Affiento Contract* was thought of, and consequently it cannot be supposed to have been raised in Prejudice or Partiality to *them*, as hath been insinuated.

Negroes, my Lord, being absolutely necessary in the *Plantations* (which cannot be improved or supported without them) may be compared to *Wool* in *England*; therefore as Encouragement is given for the *Importation* of *Wool* into *England*, from *Spain* and *Ireland*, free of *Duties*, and the *Exportation* of it unwrought is prohibited; so it was thought necessary to make the *Importation* of *Negroes* into *Jamaica* easy, and to lay the *Duty* on *Exportation*.

This will be allowed more reasonable, when it is considered, that it is a *Duty* on *Trade* with *Foreigners*, and consequently laid on *them*, it being generally allowed, that the *Duty* or *Custom* on any *Commodities* falls on the *Consumer*, or *Purchaser*, and not on the *Importer*; and therefore it was natural and consistent with the Practice in *England* and other *Countries*, to lay the *Duty* on *Export* rather than on the *Import*, in regard that as *Negroes* are necessary to work up their *Manufactures*, so the *Purchase* of *Negroes*, cheaper or dearer, would enable them in some Measure to sell their *Commodities* proportionably. Several other Instances may be given to corroborate what I have asserted, beside the Case of *Wool*; but I shall only mention an *Act of Parliament*, made in the Eighth Year of the late King *George*, Chap. the 15th, wherein among other Things, it is enacted, that For the further Encouragement of the *Manufactures* of this Kingdom, by the promoting the *Importation* of *Drugs* and other Goods used for *Dying*, it shall and may be lawful to import into this Kingdom all Sorts of *Drugs* and other Goods used for *Dying*, therein specified, without paying any *Subsidy*, *Custom*, *Imposition*, or other *Duty* whatsoever for the same. And to the End the Encouragement given to the *Manufactures* of this Kingdom in allowing the foreign *Drugs*, or other Goods used in *Dying*, therein mentioned, to be imported *Duty* free, according to the true Meaning of this *Act*, may in no wise

wise tend to the Benefit of the Manufactures made in foreign Parts, as it may do, should such Drugs, or other Goods, used in Dying, be again carried out of this Kingdom, without paying any Duty for the same, whereby they may be sold in foreign Markets so much cheaper; it is enacted, that all such Drugs and other Goods used in Dying, which shall be imported into this Kingdom by Virtue of this Act, and which shall be again exported thereout, shall pay a Subsidy of Poundage, according to the several Rates and Values of the Goods therein particularly enumerated, the Sum of Six Pence, and so after that Rate for greater or lesser Quantities.

SINCE then it appears to be the Custom or Policy of England, to encourage or discourage the Importation or Exportation of Commodities according to the Usefulness of them, it must certainly be allowed, not only reasonable, but necessary, that all Countries dependant on England, should observe the Maxims of their Mother-Country; for their Interests are interwoven, and whatever is hurtful to one, must affect the other: and therefore, since it is thought necessary to prohibit the Export of Wool, and to lay the Duty on Drugs and Dyers Wares on Exportation, how much more reasonable is it to lay a moderate Duty on Negroes exported from Jamaica to the Dominions of any foreign Prince; for the Exportation of Wool, Drugs and Dyers Wares, can only affect Part of the British Manufactures; whereas Negroes are the absolute Support and Dependance of the Plantations. It is Negroes that make Sugar and Indigo; it is Negroes that plant Cotton and Ginger; it is Negroes that gather Piemento; it is Negroes that cut Fustick, Brazilletta, and all other dying Woods; in fine, it is Negroes that are the whole and sole Manufacturers and Labourers in the Southern Colonies.

THUS, my Lord, I have shewn how this Trade for Negroes was opened, and successfully carried on from Jamaica, for many Years; that it was a principal Mean of the Island's being so well settled, and not only brought into his Majesty's Revenues above 4000*l.* per. Ann. but maintain'd above 1500 Seamen, who were a great Security to it: I have shewn that no other Nation, nor even the

the *South-Sea Company* can carry on the *Affiento Trade* to any Advantage, but rather at a very great Loss, without the Assistance of that *Island*; and therefore its being in *their Hands*, and exercised in the *Manner* they have done, are the only Means that could deprive the Inhabitants of that *beneficial Commerce* which they enjoyed for so many Years: I have shewn, that the *Duty* of 205. *per Head* on *Negroes exported*, was laid several Years before the *Affiento*, or even the *South-Sea Company* were thought of, and that the *Manner* of it is agreeable to the *Custom* and *Policy* of *England*, in *parallel Cases*. And it will likewise be made appear that the continuing of the *Duty* on *Negroes imported* into *Jamaica*, and taking it off of the *Negroes exported* by the *South-Sea Company*, may tend to the Discouragement of the *British Plantations*, and to the Improvement of the *Dominions* of foreign *Princes*.

I SHALL now enquire into the Merits of the *South-Sea Company's Petition*, and trace their *pretended Grievance* from the Time they first settled their Factory at *Jamaica*; and this will naturally discover the *Fallacy* and *Unreasonableness* of their *Pleas*, and the Point they evidently drive at.

WHEN the *Affiento* was granted to that *Company*, it was early inculcated into them, with some sinister Design, to avoid *Jamaica*, as a Rock which they would split on; this created a Prejudice to the *Island*, and was the Occasion of their Factory's being first settled at *Berbadoes*: but they were soon convinced of the Inconveniencies which attended them in *that Island*, and that it would be more to their Advantage to remove it to *Jamaica*.

THE *Assembly*, upon their meeting to raise the necessary Supplies for the Support of the Government, took into Consideration the declining Condition of their Trade, and the great Diminution of *Inhabitants*, particularly *Seamen*, which they justly attributed to the Erection of that *Company*; they therefore thought it but reasonable, that they should contribute towards the Support of the Government, especially since the *Company* derived so many Advantages from the *Island*: They

considered, that the *private Traders* were very *beneficial*, by the *Employment* they gave to great Numbers of People, particularly *Seamen*, who were *resident* among them; that they not only paid *publick* but *parochial Taxes*; and were at all Times ready on any *Invasion*, or other *Emergency*: And therefore, as there should be some *Distinction* on those Accounts, and as the *Company* had it in their Power to make the *Spaniards* pay whatever *Duties* were laid on them (they having the *Trade* for *Negroes*, *exclusive* of all others) they imposed a *Duty* of 20 s. *per Head* on all *Negroes* exported by the *private Traders*, as customary, and 40 s. *per Head* on all *Negroes* exported by the *South-Sea Company*. This occasion'd a great *Clamour* from the *Company*, who were so far incensed at it, that they removed their *Factory* to *Berbadoes*, till his late Majesty was pleased to give an *Instruction*, that there should be no *Distinction* in the Manner of laying those *Duties*.

BUT, though there is a seeming *Hardship* and *Partiality* on the Face of the Thing, yet the ill *Impression* it made will be taken off, when the *Reasons* and *Motives* of that Proceeding are seriously weighed and considered. The *Assembly*, however, submitted to his Majesty's Pleasure, and no other or *greater Duty* was laid on the *Company* than on the *private Traders*; yet it seems even that did not content them, nothing would do but an *Exemption of all Duties*: And to effect it with a better Face, they pretended, that it was a *Hardship* to pay *Duties* on *Negroes* imported for *Refreshment* only; and upon a *Petition* to his Majesty, a *subsequent Instruction* was given to the *Governor*, not to assent to any *Act of Assembly*, that should impose a *Duty* on *Negroes* imported for *Refreshment* only.

THE *Assembly* plainly saw what the *Company* aim'd at, which perhaps was not so well known or consider'd at home; they therefore in the *Bill*, which was annually brought in for that Purpose, enacted the following Clause:

“ PROVIDED always, and it is hereby enacted and ordained by the Authority aforesaid, that all *Negroes* or other *Slaves* brought into this *Island* for *Refreshment*,
“ which

" which shall be deemed only to be so, in case no Part
 " of the Ship's Cargo shall be landed or sold in this
 " Island, shall be free and exempt from all Duties, im-
 " posed by this Act, on Negroe and other Slaves, and
 " that the Master and Factor, Agent or Attorney, to
 " whom such Ship, Sloop or Vessel is consigned, or such
 " other Person or Persons on whom the Master values
 " himself, shall and are hereby required and obliged
 " within twenty-four Hours after the Arrival of such
 " Ship, Sloop or Vessel, to take the following Oath, viz.
 " I A. B. do swear, that all the Negroe and other Slaves
 " brought into this Island, in the Ship or Vessel, called
 " the ~~whereof~~ *whereof*
 " is Master, were not brought in, or intended to be
 " brought into this Island for Sale, or upon any other
 " Account whatsoever, than for Refreshment; and that
 " no Part thereof have or are intended to be landed,
 " to the best of my Knowledge.

" AND be it further enacted by the Authority afore-
 " said, That every Exporter of any Negroes so import-
 " ed for Refreshment, shall take the following Oath,
 " viz. I A. B. swear, that the Negroes ship'd on board
 " ~~whereof~~ *whereof*
 " is Master, bound to ~~where im-~~
 " ported into this Island in ~~whereof~~ *is Master, only for Re-*
 " refreshment; and that no Part of the said Negroes so
 " imported, were or are intended to be landed for Sale,
 " or the Property otherwise altered. Which said sever-
 " al Oaths the Receiver General for the Time being,
 " or his Deputy, or in his Absence, any of the Port Of-
 " ficers for the Time being, are hereby impowered and
 " authorized to administer; and the same shall be sub-
 " scribed by the Party deposing, and afterwards record-
 " ed in the Book of Entries, kept by him before whom
 " such Oaths shall be made; and that whosoever shall
 " not take the said Oath or Oaths within the aforesaid
 " Time, shall pay the said Duties imposed by this Act;
 " and that it shall and may be lawful for the Master of
 " such Ship, Sloop or Vessel, or the Factor, Agent or
 " Attorney to whom such Ship, Sloop or Vessel, is con-
 " signed,

“ signed, or on whom the Master values himself, to
 “ transport the said Negroe, or other Slaves, in any
 “ Ship, Sloop, or other Vessel, belonging to any of his
 “ Majesty’s Subjects, free and exempt from all Duties
 “ and Impositions laid or imposed by Virtue of this
 “ Act.”

It will be too tedious to enumerate every Particular, or shew what other Steps were taken in this Affair by the *Company* to accomplish their End; what I have already offer’d is sufficient for my Purpose, and therefore I shall proceed to their *Petition* to his Majesty in Council, which sets forth:

“ That they beg Leave most humbly to take Notice,
 “ that the greatest Hardship they lie under, viz. the
 “ laying of Duties in *Jamaica* on Negroes landed for
 “ Refreshment only, is a Fact which has been made ap-
 “ pear to your Majesty, the Truth of which is stated in
 “ the Report of the Right Honourable the Lords Com-
 “ missioners of Trade and Plantations, made to your
 “ Majesty on the Reference of your Petitioners former
 “ Petition, and is contrary, as your Petitioners humbly
 “ conceive, to former Orders of Council; and they
 “ beg Leave to observe, that the only Fact which they
 “ conceive requires further Enquiry, is what Part of the
 “ Duties which have already been levied, on the Com-
 “ pany’s Slaves in *Jamaica*, has been laid on the Slaves
 “ brought there by the *Company*, and what Part was
 “ laid on Slaves landed there for Refreshment only.”

WOULD not any one imagine that the *South-Sea Com-
 pany* aim’d at nothing more than an Exemption of
 Duties on Negroes imported for Refreshment only, and
 re-exported without any Alteration or Change of Pro-
 perty, by their Ships touching there for Water, or a few
 Provisions, and with no other Design? So it seems their
 own Council took it, and fairly stated the Case, saving
 an Assertion founded on the *Petition*, that the Acts of
 Assembly were not agreeable to his Majesty’s Instructions,
 and that the landing of a Barrel of Flower, or a Bag
 of Peas, according to the strict Meaning of the Clause,
 might be construed an Alteration of Property, and by
 that

that Means a Cargo of *Negroes* made liable to the Payment of *Duties*.

Upon reading the several *Acts of Assembly*, together with his Majesty's *Instruction*, they were found agreeable and conformable thereto ; and the *Factor for the Assiento*, well knowing that they could not support the other *Allegations*, found himself under a Necessity of declaring, " That the *South-Sea Company* had three Ways of carrying on their Trade for *Negroes*, viz. by their own *Ships*, by *Contract*, and by purchasing from private *Traders at Jamaica* ; that they bought some, and sold others, in order to sort and make a proper Cargo for the *Spaniards* ; and that it was not a Place for Refreshment only." And to smoothe and colour the unreasonable Expectations of the *Company*, he made a long Harangue of great *Benefits* which the *Island* received by the *Company*, with some other Particulars, foreign to the Purpose, and calculated only to confuse the Affair.

My Lord, what that *Gentleman* declared was as much to our Purpose as could be wished or desired ; for as he acknowledg'd that the *Assiento Trade* could not be carried on to Advantage without landing and sorting their *Negroes*, by selling such as the *Spaniards* would not purchase, and buying others to make a proper Assortment, it was giving up the Question, and owning that the Business of Refreshment was nothing more than an Artifice to evade the Payment of *Duties*.

THE true State of the Case is this: The *South-Sea Company* charter *Ships* to transport *Negroes* from *Africa* to *Jamaica*, for the *Assiento Trade* ; the *Negroes* are taken out there, and the *Ships* discharged ; such *Negroes* as are proper for the *Spaniards* are sent out in the *Company's Sloops*, which are station'd there for that Purpose ; the others sold in the *Island*, and sometimes thirty or forty of the very best they can pick out of a Ship are purchased from the private *Traders at Jamaica*, to make up the Number and Assortment they are obliged to send out. This they call *Importation for Refreshment only* ; this is their Plea and Pretention for an Exemption of *Duties* ; for surely they neither merit, nor ought to be allowed greater Privileges than the rest of his Majesty's Subjects.

Subjects. Has not every Merchant, who imports Goods into *England*, and exports part of them, an equal Right to an *Exemption of Duties* on what he exports? Yet it is well known, that though a *Drawback* is allowed on *Exportation*, something remains to the Government, more or less, according to the Usefulness of the Commodity in *Great Britain*; other Commodities are imported, *Duty free*, and liable to a *Subsidy of Poundage on Exportation*, as *Drugs*, and all kind of Goods used in *Dying*; and some prohibited being exported unwrought, as *Wool*, which is not so necessary in *England* as *Negroes* are in the *Plantations*, because *Wool* is but part of the *English Manufactures*, whereas the *Plantations* absolutely depend on *Negroes*, and without them must be thrown up, or be of inconsiderable Value.

It is likewise observable, that those *Duties* and *Impositions* in *England* are not only due and payable upon *Entry*, or their being landed, but upon a Ship's coming to an Anchor on this Side the *Hope*, even tho' she does not break Bulk, and proceeds with her whole Cargo to some other Country; whereas we apprehend, that by the *Instruction* which is said to be given to *Major General Hunter*, the *South-Sea Company* will be liable to pay *Duties* for such *Negroes* only as they sell in the *Island*, and are purchased there for *Exportation*, and that they are thereby exempted from any *Imposition* or *Subsidy* whatever, on such *Negroes* as they import and re-export themselves.

INDEED, my Lord, were the Case reverse, even in the Sense the *South-Sea Company* would have it understood, the *Duty* on *Negroes* exported, without any *Distinction* whatever, is just, reasonable, and necessary, in regard to the many Benefits which the *Company* receive from this *Island*, and to their having it in their Power to oblige the *Spaniards* to repay it: But more especially when it is consider'd, that the Trade they now enjoy was, for many Years, in their Hands, and that no other Nation or People can deprive them of it; that it brought in great Riches, which circulated in the *Island*, whereas it is now confined to the *Company*, and nothing more expended than barely for *Necessaries* for their *Factories*, and a few Vessels, which are in their Service; that the
private

private Traders employ'd 1500 *Seamen*, who were a *Security* to the *Island*, as they were settled there with their *Families*; and that the *Duties* arising from *Negroes* exported brought into his Majesty's *Revenues* above 4000*l.* *per Annum* for above twenty Years past, which will now be in a Manner lost. Can it then be thought reasonable that the *Island* shall be stripp'd of so many *Benefits*, and receive no more *Duties* from the *South-Sea Company* than from a *private Merchant*? And yet this is evidently the Case; for if the *South-Sea Company* are to pay *Duties* only on *such Negroes* as they dispose of in the *Island*, or purchase there, for *Exportation*, the Amount thereof will not exceed 2500*l.* *per Annum*, whereas the *Duties* on 900 *Pipes of Madera Wine* will pay as much; so that a *Wine Merchant* who deals for 16 or 17000*l.* which is generally about the Value of *those Wines*, will pay as much *Duty* to the Crown, towards the Support of the Government of the *Island*, as the *South-Sea Company*, which carries on a Trade from thence for above half a Million of Money yearly. It is further remarkable, that the *Duties*, which they will be liable to pay, is on their Trade within the *Island*, but the most extensive and beneficial Branch of their *Commerce*, which are the *Negroes* exported on account of the *Affiento Contract*, are in a manner exempted of all *Duties*, since they purchase very few in the *Island*, and only now and then thirty or forty to make up an *Assortment*, as I observed before, and such only, we apprehend will be liable to the *Duty* on *Exportation*. Surely it cannot be thought proper, that a *Company*, which is said to give no new, no real Advantages to the Nation, should be indulged at the Expence of an *Island*, that is a *Spring of Riches*, and has brought more Wealth to it, than even the *Original Capital Stock* of the *South-Sea Company*.

I WILL not trouble your Grace with entring into every Particular asserted by the *South-Sea Company's Factor*; and shall only make some Observations on the most remarkable Passages, which seem'd to carry with them some Weight, though there was no real or solid Foundation for it.

First,

First, He asserted, That the French Ships in the South-Seas, and not the South-Sea Company, occasioned the Loss of the private Trade from Jamaica.

To which I beg Leave to observe, that the *French Ships* in the *South-Seas* might, in some Measure, lessen the Demand of our *Manufactures*, which the *Spaniards* usually were supplied with from *Jamaica*: But they could not possibly hurt the *private Traders* in the Sale of *Negroes*, because it is not practicable to carry them that Way: And it has been made appear that no *other Nation* can deprive the Island of that beneficial Commerce; and consequently, the *Affiento* being in the Hands of the *South-Sea Company*, and exercised in the Manner it has been, is the true and only Cause of the Loss of the *private Trade*.

As to the Intelligence which it is said the *Spaniards* have had from Time to Time, concerning the *trading Sloops* fitted out from *Jamaica*, by which Means their Traffick has been interrupted, and several of them taken; I hope it is not true, that they had those Informations from some of the *South-Sea Company's Servants*, because such Practices are not only unfair, but unbecoming *Englishmen*, who ought always to regard the *Publick Good*, and not sacrifice any Part of it, nor the Interest of any of their Countrymen, upon any Pretence whatever.

Secondly, T H A T the private Traders sell Negroes from 80 to 120 Pieces of Eight per Head; whereas the Company sell from 250 to 300 Pieces of Eight.

HERE that Gentleman detracted from the *private Sales*, and magnified the *Company's*; for as I never knew the one so low, excepting for *Negroes* which were very ordinary, so I believe it will be difficult for him to prove that the *Company* have been able to reach such advanced Rates, on the North Side of *America*: And though possibly the *Spaniards* may give 300 Pieces of Eight for some of their *clever Girls*, as he called them, yet

yet I am well informed that they are supplied with *able working Negroes*, even by the *Company*, at *lesser Prices*. So that if a *fair Estimate* was made, and every *Expende* and *Casualty* accounted for, such as the *Duties* to the *King of Spain*, *Charges* in maintaining their *several Factories*, *bad Debts* contracted among the *Spaniards*, and the *Damage* which they sustain by *Escapes*, *Death* and *Sickness* of *Negroes*, in travelling them from *Porto Bello* to *Panama*, through a wild, rainy, mountainous, unwholesome Country; and considering likewise the *Difference*, as to the *Goodness* of the *Negroes* which were exported by the *private Traders*, and what are now exported by the *South-Sea Company*, I am of Opinion it will be found that the *Prices* obtained by the former, were at least *equal* to what the *Company* have really had.

BUT, supposing the Fact to be as he stated it, it is so far from being an Argument in Favour of the *Company*, that it is manifestly the Reverse; for if the *private Traders*, who have their *Negroes* at second and worst Hand, by buying them in *Jamaica*, can afford to sell them again from 80 to 120 Pieces of Eight *per Head*, though they pay the *Duties* on *Exportation*; certainly the *Company*, who are supposed to have them at the *best Hand*, by *importing* them from *Africa*, and disposing of them again at such *great Prices* among the *Spaniards*, may not only afford, but ought to pay at least the *same Duties*, which are paid by the *private Traders*.

Thirdly, *T H A T* the *Company* is very *beneficial* to the *Island*; that they employ 800 Seamen; occasion a Circulation of Money; and are the Means of bringing vast Numbers of *Negroes* into the *Island*.

WHAT did that Gentleman mean by those Assertions, which are so easily disprov'd? It is well known that the *Company* have not more than five or six Sloops stationed at *Jamaica*, and navigated with between thirty and forty Men each; so that the whole Number is under 200 Men. But supposing that they did employ 800 Seamen, are they *equally beneficial* to a like Number, who are

settled with their *Wives* and *Families* on the Island; much less to 1500, as there actually were, before the *English* had the *Assiento*?

WHEN the *Company* purchased their *Negroes* in *Jamaica*, great Numbers were brought to that Market, which indeed occasion'd a Circulation of Money for a little time; but since they have fallen into the Method of sending to *Africa* to purchase Slaves, they have drove several *private Merchants* out of the Trade; and if they pursue the *same Measures*, will, in a little time, engross it to themselves; this will be the same Thing in its Consequences, as if they obtained an *exclusive Charter*, which has been so much dreaded and opposed by the Merchants of *Bristol*, and other trading *Towns* as well as *London*.

As to the Advantages, which the Island is said to receive by the Shipping which import *Negroes* into *Jamaica* for the *South-Sea Company*, are they any *new Acquisitions*, or equal to what they formerly had even in that Respect; were not Ships employ'd, before the *South-Sea Company* obtained the *Assiento Contract*, to transport *Negroes* for the *Spanish Trade*, as well as for the Use of the Island? It is evident, that not only those Ships, but their Cargoes belong'd to *private Merchants* in *London*, *Bristol*, and *Liverpool*, who employ'd *Factors* settled in *Jamaica*, and the supplying the *private Traders* with *Negroes* was very beneficial to them, as well as to the Inhabitants; and those *Factors* not only employ'd a great Number of *People* under them, but purchased the Product of the Island to load their Ships; and the Money laid out by those Means, as well as for Stores and Necessaries, circulated in the Island, and occasioned a Life and Spirit amongst them.

Fourthly, *THAT* there had been a greater private Trade carried on from *Jamaica*, since the Year 1723, than in eighteen Years which he had known the Island.

HERE I am at a Loss how to take that *Gentleman's* Meaning; if he would be understood a Trade carried on by the *Merchants* who reside in *Jamaica*, it is contrary

trary to their Advices, and to the Informations of several credible Persons, who are lately come from thence ; though possibly there might have been a very considerable *private Trade* carried on, which, perhaps, *some of his Friends* are able to explain, though I am not.

IN the latter End of the Year 1723, there was indeed a very brisk Trade, for a few Months ; but a Stop was soon put to it, though I hope not by *such Means* as the People of *Jamaica* imagine. And they have since been so far from having any Trade, excepting for a few *Provisions*, that above 100,000*l.* Value, in *British Manufactures*, now lie there decaying, and cannot be vended.

AND here I cannot pass by an Observation, which was made by the *South-Sea Company's Factor*, that the *Affiento* was a *losing Contract* to former *Affientists*, and that he doubted whether the *South-Sea Company* were any *Gainers* by it : If this be the Case, will an *Exemption of Duties* in *Jamaica* make it a *beneficial Commerce* ; or is it reasonable that *that Island* should contribute towards any *Deficiency* which may happen in *their Trade* ? And yet it is further remarkable, that all the *Duties*, which they would be liable to pay in sixteen Years (in which time their Contract expires) will not amount to *one half per Cent.* that is, not to *ten Shillings* in every 100*l.* of their *Capital* in sixteen Years.

BUT though it is doubted whether the *South-Sea Company* are *Gainers* by the *Affiento Contract*, yet it is generally allowed, that the Trade which was formerly carried on from *Jamaica* was very *beneficial* to *Great Britain*, as well as to the *Island*, and not attended with so many ill Consequences. This leads me to explain more particularly, wherein this Commerce with the *Spaniards* for *Negroes* was beneficial in its former *Channel* ; and yet hurtful to the *Colonies* in general, as well as to *Jamaica*, by the Manner in which it has been lately exercised by the *South-Sea Company*.

WHEN the *Portuguese* had the *Affiento Contract*, they, as well as the *private Traders*, bought all their *Negroes* in *Jamaica*, and were even obliged to take up considerable Sums of Money on Bottom-ree, for which they gave a high Premium, no less than 25 and 30 *per*

Capt. as I have been informed. This was the more *beneficial*, because any Man had the Liberty of subscribing what Sum he pleased, not under 100*l.* and their Dividends were punctually paid every Voyage, which was usually compleated in five or six Weeks. By those Means the Settlement of the *Portuguese Factory* must certainly be allowed to have been a very great Advantage to the Island; especially when it is considered, that it was so far from being a Hinderance to the *private Trade*, that it rather promoted it; for under their Cover very considerable Quantities of *British Manufactures* were yearly vended.

THE *Trade*, which was afterwards carried on for *Negroes*, by the *private Traders*, was likewise the least Branch of their Commerce with the *Spaniards*; for a Sloop which carried out 120 *Negroes*, generally had on Board 7 or 8000*l.* Value in other Merchandise, which they were not under any Difficulty of disposing; for the Necessity which the *Spaniards* were under for *Negroes*, before they were so largely supplied by the *South-Sea Company*, occasioned the Royal Officers to wink at those Proceedings, though they are now, by that and some other Means, become more strict.

FROM hence it appears, that the *Portuguese Assiento Company*, and the *private Traders* of *Jamaica*, were not only beneficial to the Island, but to the Trade and Navigation of Great Britain; the Merchants of London and Bristol furnishing them with *Negroes* and woollen Goods, created Employment for a great Number of Factors, Tradesmen, Shipping and Seamen, and the Money brought into the Island being soon after remitted home, occasioned a Circulation here as well as there; whereas now every Thing in that Way is engrossed and swallowed up in that great Gulph, and not only the Inhabitants of *Jamaica*, but the *British Merchants* and Seamen are deprived of their usual Employment.

NOR had our Planters then any Cause of Complaint that the very best *Negroes* were sent to the *Spaniards*, and they necessitated to take the worst, and such as they would not purchase; for the *private Traders* generally bought a Ship's Cargo round, or perhaps did not refuse
more

more at any time than twenty or thirty *meagre* and *distemper'd* Negroes; whereas the *South-Sea Company* will not make Choice of above *one half* of a Ship's Cargo, and the Reason of it is plain, none but the very best, and such as will yield the *highest Rates*, will bear those *excessive Charges* which they are at; for a *tolerable* *Negro*, who will not yield above half Price, is liable to the *same Expences* as the very best. By those Means the *Spaniards* are now furnish'd with the *choicest* *Negroes* which are to be had, and our *own Plantations* with the *worst*; whereas they formerly bought the good and bad together, and gave great Prices even for *stubborn rebellious* *Negroes*, which our *Planters* were glad to be rid of; but as they have now *better and more Choice*, they will not purchase them at any Rate.

It is likewise necessary to observe, that the Trade for *Negroes*, before it was in the Hands of the *South-Sea Company*, was chiefly to *Porto Bello* and *Carthagera*, from whence they were sent by the *Spaniards* to inland Countries, *viz. Lima, Peru, Santa fee, &c.* where they cannot possibly prejudice the *British Plantations*; because in those *distant Countries* the making of *Sugar*, and such like Commodities, to send to *Europe*, can never answer: But, the furnishing the *Havanna*, and *St. Jago de cuba*, which are *Sea-Ports*, and have a constant Correspondence with *Old Spain*, may be of pernicious Consequence to our Colonies, and of Course to the *British Trade and Navigation*. This will not appear an imaginary Notion, when it is considered, that the *Spaniards* have actually settled above 30 *new Sugar Works* near the *Havanna*, since the *South-Sea Company* appointed a *Factory* there; and by their continuing to furnish them with *choice* *Negroes*, and purchasing their *Sugar*, and other Commodities, to send to *Europe*, as I have been informed, the *Spaniards* no doubt will be encouraged by those Means, to improve those *Manufacturies*. It may perhaps be enquired, whether the *Jamaica Traders* did not do the same; to which I must observe, that there was but little Correspondence between *Jamaica* and those Places; and though a considerable Trade was carried on to the

South

*South-Cays**, yet it was generally for *Woollens*, *Linnens*, and some *Negroes*, which were seldom the best.

But, supposing that they had actually traded for an equal Number of *Negroes*, it could not possibly be attended with the same bad Consequences, because the *Spaniards* cannot export those Commodities themselves, for want of *Navigation* and *Seamen*; and no other Nation or People are admitted into their Ports but the Vessels belonging to the *South-Sea Company*, and consequently, as it is impracticable for any other Traders to take those Commodities off their Hands, when they are made, it is a Discouragement, and may prevent their making any great Quantities, or more than for their own Consumption, when they cannot vend them.

I MUST own, it is the Interest of *Great Britain* to import in our *Bottoms*, from other Countries, even such Commodities as are produced in our own *Plantations*, provided we cannot discourage their being made, or when they are made, their being brought into *Europe*: But to furnish a Nation, who are otherwise incapacitated for such Attempts, with *Labourers* to make the same Commodities, and when they are made, to bring them to Market, must certainly be allowed a manifest Injury to the *British Colonies*, and inconsistent with the general Interest of the Kingdom.

It is also worth observing, that the continuing the Duty on *Negroes* imported into *Jamaica*, and taking it off from the Company's *Negroes*, which are re-exported to the *Dominions* of a foreign Prince, may not only discourage any further Improvements being made in that Island, but greatly prejudice the *British Trade* and *Navigation*; for as the *Southern Colonies* cannot be improved or subsisted without *Negroes*, and at easy Rates, so it cannot be supposed that the Merchants will so readily and freely import them, while they are clogg'd with Duties.

* Small Islands belonging to the *Spaniards*, which are within two Miles of *Cuba*, and eighteen Leagues North of the West End of *Jamaica*.

ties which raise the *Value* of them, and consequently disable them from selling at such Rates as they might otherwise do. On the other Hand, such a *Restriction*, as is said to be laid by the Governor's new *Instruction*, does not only seem repugnant to the Practice of *England*, as I have shewn in parallel Cases, but it is also to be considered, that if such great *Quantities* of *Negroes* are continued to be sent amongst the *Spaniards*, (and those the best which are to be had, while our own *Plantations* must be contented with the worst, and such as they will not purchase) and Encouragement given to it, by continuing the *Duty* on what are sold to our *Planters*, and taking it off entirely from those *Negroes* which are re-exported by the *Company*, it may be a Means of their being so well stocked, as to enable them to make such further Improvements in *Sugar*, and other *Commodities*, as may exceed the Consumption of *Europe*.

10 We already find, that our *Exports* of the *Product* of our *Plantations* from *Great Britain* are greatly diminished within a few Years, by Reason that the *Dutch* and *French* furnish foreign Markets with the same *Commodities* cheaper than we can do; so that unless some Method can be thought of, to put them at least on an equal Footing with their Neighbours, that beneficial Branch of *Commerce* will be lost to the *Nation*.

How far it may therefore be reasonable to restrain the *Company*, and others, in the Number of *Negroes*, which they export to some particular Places; or how far it is adviseable, or indeed absolutely necessary, in regard to these Hints, to take proper Measures for furnishing the *British Plantations* with *Negroes* at easier Rates, by taking off the *Duties* on *Import*, and to make them dearer to *Foreigners*, by laying such a *Duty* on *Export*, as may be thought reasonable, is well worth the Consideration of Your Grace, and of every Man, who has any Regard for the true Interest of his Country.

It is also worth considering, how far it is consistent with the *South-Sea Company's Charter*, to trade either on the *Coast of Guinea*, or in our own *Plantations*; and though I will not pretend to give my Opinion of the Matter, yet I may be allowed to say, there is nothing
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contained in the *Act for incorporating the South-Sea Company*, which grants them any such Privilege; and that whenever any *Company* attempts to trade beyond their Limits, it ought to alarm every Man, who has any Regard for *Trade*, or for the true *Interest of his Country*. Should the *East-India Company* trade in any other Manner than is prescribed by their *Charter*, would it not occasion a Clamour, and justly raise the Resentment of every trading *Town in England*? And what Pretensions have the *South-Sea Company* to a greater Indulgence than any other *Corporation*? As their *Capital* is the largest of any in the World, what Power may they not be Masters of? And consequently, ought we not to be more watchful and jealous of their Proceedings, than of any other *Company*, or Body of Men? for if they are not laid under some Restrictions, and are resolved to carry on a Trade to any Country, is it not in their Power to ruin every *Merchant*, who deals the same Way, or oblige him to leave it off? And if they drive all *private Merchants* out of a Trade, will it not be the same Thing in its Consequences, as if they obtained an *exclusive Charter* for every Branch of Trade which belongs to *Great Britain*?

THESE are not Apprehensions without Foundation; the *South-Sea Company* have given us a *Specimen* of what they have in View, by their late Proceedings on the *Coast of Guinea*; and by sending such great Quantities of *Negroes* to *Jamaica* as they have done, on Pretence of furnishing the *Spaniards*, on Account of the *Affiento Contract*. It was openly declared and allowed by the *South-Sea Company's Factor*, before the *Committee of his Majesty's Council*, that in order to carry on the *Affiento Trade* to any Advantage, it was absolutely necessary to import into *Jamaica*, at least, double the Quantity of *Negroes* they re-exported; that is, if they vended yearly among the *Spaniards* 4000 *Negroes*, they must import at least 8000; the Consequence of which will be, that, as they import 4000 *Negroes* into *Jamaica* more than they export, which must be sold in the Island, (and are near the Number which it is able to take off yearly) it will for a Year or two occasion *Negroes* to be so very cheap

cheap, that no *private Merchant* can afford them, and of Course they must either leave off the Trade, or be ruined. And when the Company have thus got that valuable Branch of *Commerce* into their Hands, will it not be in their Power afterwards, to set what Price they please on *Negroes*, as well as the *Product* of the *Island*? Nay, will it not be in their Power, or their *Factors*, to controul the Proceedings of the *Assembly*, and to make even the *Administration* uneasy to any *Governor*, who will not readily acquiesce with, or come into their Measures? Nor are we sure that Things will stop here; for when they have entered so far into the *Guinea Trade*, they may as easily drive all other *British Traders* out of it, and have the same Influence over the rest of the *Southern Colonies*, which cannot be subsisted without *Negroes*.

It is therefore obvious, that the Manner of exercising the *Assiento Trade*, may prove very prejudicial to the *British Merchants*, and to the *Colonies* in general, as well as to the *Island of Jamaica*. We already feel some of the Effects of it by the *Price* of *Negroes* being raised very considerably on the *Coast of Guinea*, and several *Merchants* quitting the *Trade*; and will not the *Price* of *Negroes* being augmented, hurt the *Plantations*, as well as their being supply'd with worse than they usually had before, since the best and choicest *Negroes* are pick'd out for the *Spaniards*? And by diverting the Trade out of its former Channel, will it not endanger its being monopolized, or, as I have observed, render it impracticable for any other *Traders*, and by that Means occasion its being engrossed by the *South-Sea Company*, which will, in its Consequences, be the same as if it were under an *Exclusive Charter*? What then will become of great Numbers of *British Merchants*, *Tradesmen*, *Manufacturers*, *Labourers*, and *Seamen*, who are supported by it? For it is evident that a Trade to any Country, which is free and open, employs a much greater Number of People of all Professions, than it does when it is in the Hands of an *Exclusive Company*. It was made appear to the *Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, by the *Traders to Africa*, that when that Trade was exclusive, the *Royal African Company* never

did employ more than 43 *Sail of Ships* in a Year; whereas they had, at that Time, belonging to the Ports of *London, Bristol, and Liverpool*, near *Two Hundred Sail*. How vast must then be the Difference in the *Export and Consumption* of the *British Manufactures*, as well as in the Number of *Seamen and others*, who thereby meet with Employment; and which must consequently diminish whenever contrary Measures are tolerated, or effected by any other Means?

But, supposing that the *Assiento Trade* will not be attended with all these bad Consequences, and that the Island of *Jamaica* is, or can be, the *only Place* affected by it; yet even that is a sufficient Objection, and a very cogent Reason against the Manner in which it has been exercis'd by the *South-Sea Company*. Their Commerce with the *Spaniards* was not carried on with their own Manufactures, nor did they send to *Africa* for *Negroes*; they were supplied with them, and *all other Commodities* proper for that Trade, by the *Merchants of London, Bristol, and Liverpool*, who are hurt by its being turned into other Channels, as well as a great Number of *Tradesmen, Seamen, and others* employed by them, more than are at present by the *South-Sea Company*. In fine, whatever Advantages were made by the Inhabitants of *Jamaica*, were in Effect so much gained to the Nation, as they are *Subjects of England*, and all their *Wealth* at last centers *here*: it must therefore be allowed, that their Interest is the Interest of the Nation, since they employ our *Navigation and Seamen*, consume our *Manufactures*, and all the *Gold, Silver, and other valuable Commodities*, which are brought into the Island, are soon after remitted to *Great Britain*, and their *Wealth* repositied here as in a *Bank*.

It was observed by a very judicious Author*, soon after the *Assiento Contract* was granted to the *English*, that, among other Disadvantages which would accrue to the Nation, by the Acceptance of that Contract, it would be attended with the Ruin of *Jamaica*; his Words

* *British Merchant*, N^o. 257. Vol. 3.

Words are so very remarkable, and some Things which he foretold have happened so exactly, that I beg leave to transcribe them.

“ ——— In all Probability, that once valuable Island
“ of *Jamaica* must soon fall into the Hands of the *French*;
“ there could not have been a better Contrivance than
“ this of the *Affiento Contract*, to throw this whole Island
“ into *their Possession*.

“ It is situated among *such Neighbours*, that it had
“ need of much greater Numbers of People than are
“ there for its Defence. Yet our false Maxims of suffer-
“ ing our People there to possess greater Tracts of Land
“ than they can plant, must needs hinder their Encrease;
“ and this *Affiento Contract*, by depriving them of their
“ best and most valuable Trade, must make them desert
“ apace; this in a little Time may expose the little
“ Remainder to our Enemies. Was this *Affiento Contract*
“ contrived for this Purpose? Yet I am afraid this will
“ not be our whole Loss: Dr. *Davenant* has said it, if
“ his Authority is good, that our Loss of *Jamaica* must
“ probably be attended with the Ruin of our Interest in
“ *America*.

“ The Act for erecting the *South-Sea Company* de-
“ prived *Jamaica* of trading to the *South-Sea*, but the
“ *Affiento Contract* has shut them out of the *Spanish*
“ *Indies*; yet their Returns of Gold and Silver, in Ex-
“ change for Negroes and other Merchandizes, were 2,
“ or 300,000*l. per Annum*. Let the *Spaniards* have
“ deprived us of this Trade; but was it fit for us to
“ give it up? How vast must be the Number of Desert-
“ ers from that Island? It was at least half the Value of
“ its whole Trade; therefore half the People must de-
“ sert! And will the Island after this Desertion be able
“ to defend it self?

“ Thus there is no Prospect of the Company's trading
“ under this Contract, or getting any Thing by it if they
“ did. Can their Goods that are to be kept two Years
“ in the King's Warehouses, and under his own Lock
“ and Key, and in so hot a Climate, be brought to a
“ good Market? or will not one half of them first pe-

rish? Can the *Affientists* hope for Profit from their Negroes, that are to pay a heavy Load of Duties to the King? Certainly no Man in the Kingdom could have contrived a *Treaty* so little to the Benefit of the Nation.

BUT, as it is necessary in order to recommend any Matter to the publick Care, to shew the Conveniencies as well as the Inconveniencies attending it; I shall lay before Your Grace, in as concise a Manner as I am able, the many Advantages which Great Britain derives from *Jamaica*, by its Situation, by the Employment it gives to our *Navigation*, by the Consumption it occasions of our *Manufactures*, and the great Value of its annual *Produce*, which is so much Gain to the Nation, over and above what is consumed within themselves in necessary and contingent Charges; for here at last their *Wealth* centers, and consequently in Fact they labour for us. And though these Things are well known to those, who have any Notions of Trade, or are acquainted that Way, yet in general they are not so well understood or considered as they ought to be; most People having no other Knowledge of it, than that it is an *Island* in the *West-Indies*, and that it makes *Sugar*; and to this Ignorance of its Worth, may in a great Measure be attributed some Inconveniencies they labour under; for we are apt to prize and extend our Care for the Preservation of Things, in Proportion to the Notions we have of the Value of them.

Jamaica lies in the Latitude of 18 Degrees, 30 Leagues W. by S. of *Hispaniola*; 15 Leagues S. of the great Island of *Cuba*; 161 Leagues N. W. by N. of *Carthagena*; 172 Leagues N. by E. of *Porto Bello*; 136 Leagues S. E. by E. of *Cape Antonio* on *Cuba*; 200 Leagues S. E. of the *Havanna*; and 352 Leagues E. & S. of *La Vera Cruz*. Being thus situated, it is needless to observe, how useful it might be made in Trade, or how capable it is of annoying the Enemy in Time of War. Where could the *Scuth-Sea Company* settle a Factory so convenient for them? And what vast Advantages might be made in Trade with proper Encouragement, which

which certainly would not be neglected by any other Nation? Is not this Island a Key to the *Spanish West Indies*, and ought we not to be as careful of it as of a Frontier? Should we ever be so unfortunate as to lose it (and I wish it may not be in some Danger under its present Circumstances) what Port would be left us in those Parts? May we not justly be apprehensive it would be attended with the Loss of the other Islands? And without them, how could the *Northern Colonies* be supported; for they have a mutual Dependence on each other? As little as we have made of the happy Situation of this Island, and as much as it seems to be despised, had we not been in possession of it in the late War with *France* and *Spain*, the *Plate Fleets* would not have come home with so much Uncertainty, nor met with so many Delays as they did: Nor would *Sir Charles Wager* have had an Opportunity of giving them so fatal a Blow, as he did in 1708. by taking and destroying their *Galleons*; a Service in its Consequence equal to the gaining of a Battle in *Flanders*? Had the other *Gentlemen*, who commanded the Ships of War on that Station, been as vigilant and brave in the Execution of their Duty, the Enemy could not have held out the War so long as they did: But, notwithstanding the Neglect of some of those Commanders, and the Cowardice of others, the *French* and *Spaniards* can give a very large Account of their Losses, and the Expences this Island put them to. And here we need not look back, since we are so lately furnish'd with a very remarkable Instance; the blocking up of the *Galleons* in *Porto Bello*, by the Squadron commanded by *Vice Admiral Hosier*, is thought to have given a Turn to the Affairs of *Europe*, and to have been no small Mortification to the *Emperor*, as well as to the *King of Spain*: But how could this have been effected, had we not been in Possession of *Jamaica*? Was it possible for that Squadron to have remained so long as they did at the *Bastimentos*, without a Supply of Refreshments, and other Necessaries? Where could they have been refitted and recruited, after so great a Mortality as happened amongst them? Must they not have been obliged to leave those Parts?

Parts? and is it not probable that some, or most of them, would have been lost, considering the Condition they were in? In fine, while we are Masters of *Jamaica*, and have a Squadron stationed there, it may be in our Power at any time, not only to block up *Porto Bello* and *Carthagena*, from whence the greatest Part of the *Spanish Treasures* are shipped off, but even to prescribe Laws to the *West Indies*; for no Ship can return to *Old Spain* from either of those Places, but must necessarily make the East or West End of that Island. Nor is there any Difficulty of intercepting the Trade from *La Vera Cruz*, *Campeachy*, and the *Havanna*, as they are within a few Days Sail, and our Ships may be supplied with Necessaries from *Jamaica*, in case there should be the like Necessity for them to remain any time on those Coasts.

It is to be observed, that as the Trade-Winds generally blow above three Quarters of the Year, in those Parts, a Vessel cannot turn up from the *Havanna* to *Carthagena* and *Porto Bello*, nor go through the other Passage, in less than six or seven Weeks; nor from either of those Places, to any *Spanish Settlement* on *Hispaniola*, in less than a Month: Whereas they can at any time run over from *Jamaica* in three or four Days, and return in six or seven Days. It also might be made appear, that *Jamaica* is a more valuable Island than *Cuba*, *Hispaniola*, or any other in *America*, not only in regard to its commodious Situation, but in being much better furnished with Harbours and Rivers*; for a Confirmation of this, I need no other Appeal, than to *Don Antonio Herrera*†, who tells us, that *Columbus* declar'd it to be the most beautiful of all the Islands he had seen.

It is computed that this Island employs three hundred Sail of Ships, and above six thousand Seamen; and that the

* There are eight fine Harbours in *Jamaica*, besides many Coves and Bays where Ships may safely ride: There are also eighty four Rivers which discharge into the Sea, and seven times as many lesser Rivers and Springs which run into them.

† Vide *Herrera's General History of America*, chap. 13.

the very *Duties* on the *Imports* from thence amount to near one hundred thousand Pounds *per Annum*; which is so much *clear Profit to the Crown*, saving what is taken off for Drawbacks on Exportation, since the *Charges* of the Government there is defray'd by *themselves*. What vast Quantities of *British Manufactures* were formerly exported to, and vendid in and by Means of that Island? And how greatly might they be improved, was their Trade encouraged, which was once so very beneficial to *Great Britain*, as well as themselves, and might still be made so in a more eminent Degree?

As to the *Produce* of the Island, I have seen an Estimate of what has been made in one Year, which amounted to upwards of *five hundred thousand Pounds Sterling*; now if it be considered that the *Freights*, *Duties*, &c. center in our selves, whatever is over and above the Value of what is exported from hence and the Northern Colonies, for the Purchase of *Negroes*, and consumed within the Island (which are chiefly *British Manufactures*, and cannot amount to 150,000 *l. per Annum*) is certainly so much Gain to the Nation, besides other Advantages derived from their Trade, which are not proper to be mentioned here.

BUT though this is a true Estimate of what has been made of the Island in one Year, yet it is with Concern that I must likewise observe, that their Product for *two Years past* will not exceed *one Half* that Value each Year; and that it is impracticable to make any Improvements, or to put even the planting Interest in its former flourishing State, without some Encouragement be given to it; and which can only be brought about by removing the *Difficulties* and *Inconveniencies* they have to struggle with.

IF the Colonies in general are allowed to be very beneficial to *Great Britain*, those are undoubtedly the most valuable which are productive of several Sorts of Commodities; *Jamaica* is also in that respect to be distinguish'd from the others; for besides *Sugars*, *Cotton*, *Ginger*, *Pimento*, *Indico*, &c. are chiefly the Productions of that Island, very little of those Commodities being imported from the rest of the *British Plantations*.

tions. So that we must be obliged to purchase them of the *French, Dutch, and other Nations*, were they not produced on that Island. Cotton is necessary to work up with *Wool* in many of our *Manufactures*; *Ginger* is chiefly exported, though great Quantities are used at home, especially among the poor People; * *Pimento* lessens the Consumption of *Spice*, which is only to be had of the *Dutch* at their own Rates; *Indigo, Logwood, Fustick, &c.* are consumed among the Dyers, and are absolutely necessary in many of our *Manufactures*. To which may be added, that before we had those Commodities of our own, we paid five times the Price for them we do now, and for some of them more; and 'tis probable we should do the same again, were we deprived of having them in the same Manner.

To explain this more particularly I must observe, that before the *British Plantations* in *South America* were settled, we paid the *Portuguese* from 4 to 5 *l. per Hundred Weight*, for *Muscovado Sugars*, which are now sold from 22 to 35 *s.* as in Goodness; and above 5 *l. per Hundred Weight* for *Ginger*, which is now commonly sold at 22 *s. 6 d.* or thereabouts. Our *Dyers Wares* were bought of the *Spaniards*, to whom we paid for *Logwood* from 100 to 150 *l. per Ton*, which may now be had at nine Pounds *per Ton*; and other Goods used in Dying proportionably. So that by having those *Plantations*, we not only save so much as was formerly paid for those Commodities to *Foreigners*, but we are able to furnish other Nations; and our *Manufacturers*, by having them at less Prices than they formerly had, are enabled to sell their Commodities proportionably cheaper, which is undoubtedly a very great Advantage to the Nation.

It is also worth observing, that not one fifth Part of the manurable Lands in *Jamaica* has ever been settled, whereas the other Islands belonging to *Great Britain* have been improved to the utmost Extent they are capable of; and some of them are almost worn out. Is
it

* Commonly called here *All-Spice*, or *Jamaica-Pepper*.

it not then worth while to encourage the settling and cultivating of those *Lands*, which have been so long neglected, since the Advantages to the Crown and Nation will be proportionably augmented; and by an Encrease of Inhabitants that valuable Island will be more effectually secured? And especially when it is considered, that the *French*, whom we have the most Reason to be jealous of, becomes more and more formidable in those Parts; they are already in Possession of near two third Parts of the great Island of *Hispaniola*, which encreases so fast in Inhabitants, that our *Plantations* will be very precarious in case of a Rupture with that Nation; since 'tis evident that their Settlements flourish, while our *Plantations*, and particularly *Jamaica*, decline every Year.

Thus I have shewn the Importance of that *Colony* to *Great Britain*, and the Necessity of looking into their present *State and Condition*, that they may in time be relieved from the many Evils which hang over them, and threaten their Destruction; they who once were able to keep the proud *Spaniards* in awe, and to strike a Terror throughout *America*, now require our Aid, and the utmost Care and Tenderness to preserve it. Their *Trade*, which was their Life and Support, is in a Manner lost, and the Inhabitants also dispirited at the *Depredations* of the *Spaniards* for several Years past, contrary to express and solemn *Treaties* then subsisting, without one Instance of *Restitution* and *Satisfaction* being made the *Parties injured*: To which may be added two dreadful *Hurricanes* within four Years, which destroyed most of their Works and Canes, and was attended with a long and pinching Drought. Humanity moves us to commiserate and relieve our Fellow Creatures under any Kind of Affliction or Distress; and are not those industrious People, from whom their Mother-Country derives so many Advantages, worthy our Attention and Care? Is it not of the highest Consequence to *Great Britain* to relieve and support them? Have they not great Reason to expect the publick Countenance and Favour, and to be made easy, that they may be encouraged to remain there, and others to go over; by which Means the Island

will be strengthened, improv'd, and become more valuable?

Sir Josiah Child, in his *Discourse on Trade*, p. 191. observes, that every *Englishman* in *Barbadoes* or *Jamaica* creates Employment for four Men at home; tho' he is short in his Computation, and it might be made appear to be more, yet even that is sufficient to shew the Importance of encouraging or discouraging of the Inhabitants of those Islands, since every Person there is of equal Benefit to the Publick, to several Hands at home, and much more useful by creating Employment for others.

AND here, my Lord, it will not be improper to touch on a Report which has been industriously spread by some prejudiced Persons, with a very base Design, viz. That the Inhabitants of *Jamaica* are a factious, discontented People, and are aiming at a State of *Independency*; which is so ridiculous and absurd an Insinuation, that it scarcely deserves any Answer: Is it possible for that *Island* to support it self, amidst such potent Neighbours as they are surrounded with, even tho' it were much better inhabited than it is at present, and in flourishing Circumstances? Or can it be supposed that they are so stupid as to imagine that they shall be easier under the *French* or *Spaniards*; for they must submit to one of them, in case they were so senseless as to shake off the *English Government*?

BUT, my Lord, were they not tied by Affection and Affinity to the People of *England*; were they not under the strongest Attachments to his Majesty's Person and Government, yet the Estates and other Dependences, which many of them have in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, and the great Number of Children which are constantly here for Education, are so many Pledges of their Fidelity.

THEY have indeed been so unfortunate as to differ with some of their Governors, who, to gain their Point, have constantly represented them in the most disagreeable Light to the Administration at home; The latter End of *Queen Anne's Reign* they were said to be of factious, turbulent Spirits, a Seed brought over with the first

first Settlers, and which had never been entirely rooted out; and of late Years they have been branded with *Jacobitism*. How inconsistent are these Characters? And is it not obvious from thence, that they are alternately reproach'd with being a Race of *Oliverians*, or with *Tory Disaffection* to the Protestant Succession, according to the Complexions of the *Ministry* at different Times, or as it is most conducive to their sinister Designs?

I AM not insensible, that the late unhappy Disputes, in relation to the Manner of reviving their *Municipal Laws*, which *expir'd* in *October 1724*. has furnished their Adversaries with an Opportunity of wounding them in the most sensible Part. And though it may seem unseasonable to touch on an Affair, which we have great Reason to believe the Island will be made easy in; yet in regard to the Characters of Persons who are at such a Distance, and to take off the Imputation laid on them, I beg Leave to observe, that they behaved on that Occasion with all the Moderation and Submission which became them: This will more evidently appear by their Address to the Governor, the late Duke of *Portland*, in *April 1726*. which sets forth:

“ THE Assurances in your Grace’s Speech of his Majesty’s Intentions to *perpetuate our Laws*, and the gracious Declarations he has often made from the Throne, of his Desire to *establish the Liberties of all his People*, have not a little encouraged us to petition (as we have by this Bill *) for such an Establishment; far, very far from intending thereby to withdraw our Duty or Gratitude to our Sovereign.

“ MY Lord, we can never be unmindful of the many Blessings of his Majesty’s Reign; nor shall we ever be wanting in Acts of Duty and Loyalty: We are fully convinced that nothing is intended by him to our Prejudice; the Moderation and Justice of his Government are to us certain Earnests to the contrary: But, my Lord, it is from so excellent a King, that the best

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“ *Laws*

* A Bill for perpetuating their Municipal Laws.

“ *Laws* are to be expected ; which perswades us, that
 “ we are not acting a disagreeable Part to his Majesty,
 “ while, with Duty and Submission to him, we are con-
 “ tending for that which distinguishes his Subjects from
 “ those of other Princes.

“ WHEN we thus confide in his Majesty’s Goodness,
 “ how is it possible we should be disturbed with imagi-
 “ nary Fears, or groundless Jealousies ; or sour’d with
 “ any sullen or stubborn Humours ? There is, indeed,
 “ my Lord, a Sort of Jealousy that is natural and inter-
 “ woven with every *English* Constitution, and which is
 “ always upon the Watch for the Preservation of the
 “ Community ; such a Jealousy might well be alarmed
 “ with the aforementioned Scheme * ; for though we
 “ confess, in the fullest Extent, his Majesty’s Right to
 “ dissent to our Laws, they ought, as we humbly ap-
 “ prehend, to take their *Rise* from *our selves*, without
 “ being obliged to *digest* what is dealt to us by *other*
 “ *Hands*, Strangers, in a great Measure, to our *Defects*
 “ and *Necessities* ; and here, my Lord, we only speak
 “ the same Language, and imitate the Spirit with
 “ which our Predecessors formerly asserted their *Right*
 “ of framing their own Bills, and in a Reign less fa-
 “ vourable to the *Liberties of the People*, prevailed in
 “ the same Point ; which Maxim of Government they
 “ wisely drew from their Mother-Country, *who can en-*
 “ *dure no Laws but those of her own chusing*, and
 “ which the Assembly hope they may now as well bor-
 “ row, not only as they are the same *English Colony*,
 “ but from the *Declarations and Concessions* of all our
 “ *Charters of Government*, as well to your Grace as to
 “ your Predecessors.”

CAN they, after such Assurances, be accused of any
 indecent Behaviour, or said to claim any other Privi-
 lege than is enjoyed by the other Colonies in common
 with

* A Report of the *Board of Trade* to his late Majesty, wherein it
 was advised to prepare the Draught of a Bill in *England*, to be
 sent to *Jamaica*.

with the rest of his Majesty's Subjects? Or is it reasonable that they should be more restrained than any other Part of the *British Dominions*? The Hints which are given of its being a *conquered Country*, and therefore that they have not equal Pretensions, may prove of fatal Consequence; for who will go over, or remain there, if they have not, at least, the same Encouragement which they have in their native Country?

ONE would think that their Behaviour, since the *Suspension of their Laws*, was enough to silence their Adversaries, and give them a further Pretension to the Affection and Favour of their Mother-Country; for tho' they have been for some time under those *unhappy Circumstances*, we hear of no *Robberies*, no *Murders*, no *Riots*, or other *Disorders*, every one is *quiet* and *undisturb'd* in his *Person* and *Property*, saving some little Uneasiness which they must needs be under at such a Juncture, as it undoubtedly occasions a *Stagnation in Trade and Credit*. And what Country in the World, in *their Circumstances*, would not be under the same or greater Inconveniencies? And therefore, as no other bad Consequences have happened, it must certainly be allowed an Argument very much in their Favour.

IT is needless to enlarge on this Head, since it cannot be doubted but that the Person whom his Majesty has been pleased to appoint Governor of *Jamaica*, and is now on his Voyage, carries with him such *Instructions* as will be agreeable in those Points; and if any other Sparks of Uneasiness remain, that they will be extinguished by the prudent Administration of that worthy Gentleman, whose Moderation, Experience and great Abilities render him every Way qualified for so great and important a Trust.

I SHALL conclude with some excellent Observations of Dr. *Davenant*, in his Discourse on the Plantation Trade: " If ever any Thing great or good, says he, be
 " done for our *English Colonies*, Industry must have
 " its due Recompense, and that cannot be without En-
 " couragement to it, which is only to be brought about
 " by *confirming their Liberties*, and establishing good
 " Discipline among them; that as they see they are a

“ free People in point of Government, so they may, by
 “ good Discipline, be kept free of the Mischiefs that fol-
 “ low Vice and Idleness.

“ AND as Care should be taken in this Respect, so
 “ without doubt 'tis adviseable, that no little Emula-
 “ tions or *private* Interests of *Governors*, nor that the
 “ *Pctitions* of *hungry Courtiers* at home, should prevail
 “ to discourage those particular *Colonies*, who in a few
 “ Years have raised themselves, by their *own Charge*,
 “ *Prudence* and *Industry*, to the Wealth and Greatness
 “ they are now arrived at, *without Expence* to the
 “ *Crown*: Upon which Account, any *Innovations* or
 “ *Breach* of their *Original Charters* (besides that it
 “ seems a Breach of the *publick Faith*) may peradven-
 “ ture not turn to the King's Profit.

AGAIN, “ The Welfare of all Countries depends upon
 “ good Government, and without doubt these *Colonies*
 “ will flourish, if they are intrusted to *honest, discreet,*
 “ and *skilful Hands*, who will let them perceive they
 “ enjoy the *Rights and Liberties* of *Englishmen*, though
 “ not in *England*.

“ INDUSTRY has its first Foundation on *Liberty*:
 “ They, who either are Slaves, or who believe *their*
 “ *Freedoms precarious*, can neither succeed in Trade,
 “ nor meliorate a Country. We shall not pretend to
 “ determine whether the People in the *Plantations*
 “ have a Right to all the *Privileges* of *English Sub-*
 “ *jects*; but the *contrary Notion* is perhaps too much
 “ *entertained* and *practised* in *Places* which happen to
 “ be *distant* from *St. Stephen's Chapel*; upon which
 “ Account it will, peradventure, be a great Security
 “ and Encouragement to those industrious People, if a
 “ *declaratory Law* were made, that *Englishmen* have a
 “ Right to all the *Laws of England*, while they remain
 “ in *Countries subject to this Kingdom*.”

F I N I S.

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